

F820004-1735

NO. 364



AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 26, 1940.

SUBJECT: Activities and Whereabouts of
Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben.

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

I have the honor, with reference to the Department's confidential circular instruction dated February 21, 1940, file no. 150/Erben, Hermann Frederick, concerning the activities and whereabouts of Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben, to report that a letter from Doctor Hermann Frederick Erben, mailed in New York on February 27, 1940, was received here by Mr. Gerhard Victor Lachmann, former assistant purser of the German S.S. Ussuluma, on which Doctor Erben formerly served as ship's surgeon. This letter, which gave the writer's present address as: c/o Dr. Rudolph Scharf, 140 East 81st Street, New York, N.Y., told that he had reached New York a few days before on the S.S. Nightingale, on which vessel he embarked as a mess boy at Antofagasta, Chile. Dr. Erben wrote that it was his understanding, at the time of signing the articles of the Nightingale, that he was to be permitted to sign off at Panamá, but that in the latter port, he was not permitted to do so by the shipping commissioner. He also informed Lachmann that he had learned, through the American consul at Antofagasta, that he was on the

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British "black list" as a suspected German agent. "This, of course," he wrote, "is a dirty lie."

Dr. Erben mentioned that he was short of funds, and was trying to borrow money enough to travel to his home in San Francisco, where he could resume his practice as a physician. He said nothing which would indicate any sympathies with the Nazi Government, nor that he might have at any time acted as an agent for it. He did make several statements, however, indicating a highly antisemitic attitude, and tending to be critical of, but not necessarily disloyal to, the United States. He spoke of New York as "Jew York" and said that, upon returning to the United States after a considerable time abroad, his impression was that the United States is a country of high civilization but low culture. He said that it was hard for him to understand the apathy shown by the people of the United States toward the war in Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Monnett B. Davis
Monnett B. Davis
American Consul General

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Original and three copies to the Department by air mail.
Confirmation copy to the Department by regular mail.
Copy to the Embassy.

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